



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
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WASHINGTON DC 20350-2000

OPNAVINST 5050.34
DNS
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OPNAV INSTRUCTION 5050.34

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: CONFERENCE HOSTING AND ATTENDANCE REQUESTS

Ref: (a) DoD Conference Guidance, Version 4.0, 26 June 2016
(b) DoD Manual 5200.01, Volume 3, DoD Information Security Program: Protection of Classified Information, 24 February 2012
(c) SECNAV M-5510.36 of June 2006
(d) Public Law 114-113, Section 739
(e) Joint Travel Regulation
(f) Joint Ethics Regulation
(g) SECNAVINST 4001.2J
(h) OPNAVINST 4001.1F

1. Purpose. To establish requirements and procedures for submittal of conference hosting and attendance requests, and associated cost reporting for all activities and organizations under the command of the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO).
2. Background. Conferences are a valuable means to train, plan, collaborate, and disseminate information. It is Department of the Navy (DON) policy that Sailors, Marines, and civilians attend conferences in order to advance the mission of the DON while ensuring proper fiscal controls and oversight are in place. Commands and organizations are to attend conferences within the constraints of their own budget and mission requirements.
3. Policy. The very definition of a conference is relatively broad and means that many meetings, seminars, training events, and symposia are, in fact, conferences, and require conference approval per reference (a). All activities and organizations are directed to comply with the requirements and procedures established in reference (a). Approval authority cost thresholds established in reference (a) are summarized in table 1.

<u>Type of Request</u>	<u>Total Cost Threshold</u>	<u>Approval Authority</u>
DON-hosted and non-Department of Defense (DoD)-hosted conferences	> \$500,000 ¹	Tier 1 conference approval authorities
DON-hosted and non-DoD-hosted conferences	More than \$100,000, up to \$500,000 ²	Tier 2 conference approval authorities
DON-hosted conference (i.e., hosting request)	\$100,000 or less	Commander or director of hosting DoD organization, or if delegated by the commander or director, to any flag officer and senior executive service (SES) civilian within the hosting organization
Non-DoD-hosted conference (i.e., attendance-only request)	≤ \$100,000 total cost and <i>more than</i> \$3,000 per person <u>or</u> <i>more than</i> \$600 per person per day	O-5/GS-14, or equivalent, and at least one level above normal temporary additional duty (TAD) approval authority
	≤ \$100,000 total cost and <i>less than</i> \$3,000 per person <u>and</u> <i>less than</i> \$600 per person per day	Supervisors with normal TAD approval authority

Table 1

Note 1: In addition to any conferences requiring tier 1 approval by higher authority (e.g. those conferences identified as over \$500,000 on Department of the Navy Assistant for Administration’s (DON/AA) “Over \$100K” list).

Note 2: In addition to any conferences requiring tier 2 approval by higher authority (e.g. those conferences identified as over \$100,000 on DON/AA’s “Over \$100K” list).

4. Approval Authorities

a. Tier 1 approval authorities are the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) and the Under Secretary of the Navy (UNSECNAV).

b. Tier 2 approval authorities for the Navy include the CNO, Vice Chief of Naval Operations (VCNO), Director, Navy Staff (DNS), two-star or higher flag officers or tier 2 or higher SES civilians in command, and any critical flag officer commanders or civilian directors designated by the CNO, VCNO, or DNS.

(1) Further delegation of tier 2 approval authority is not authorized.

(2) Conferences requiring tier 2 approval may be approved by personnel serving in an "Acting" capacity, but authority may not be exercised "By Direction" or "For" the approving official.

c. As outlined in reference (a), commanders and directors of organizations at the flag or SES level may delegate approval authority for conference hosting requests totaling less than \$100,000 to any flag officer or SES within the hosting organization. This delegation must be accomplished in writing.

5. Responsibilities

a. Hosting Command

(1) Provide a complete list of all invited DoD commands to include the number and estimated costs of attendees from each command in the hosting request. Include all hosting and attendee travel costs in the total cost estimate for the conference request.

(2) Reference (a) identifies three situations where enhanced scrutiny must be applied by the approval authority: 1) spousal travel, 2) co-sponsorship with a non-federal entity, and 3) utilizing conference planners. Legal review must be performed and circumstances should be addressed in the hosting request for conferences involving any of these conditions.

(3) As applicable, comply with all requirements for hosting a classified conference or presenting classified material as outlined in references (b) and (c).

(4) Communicate any limitations and parameters of the approval to all attendees once the hosting request has been approved. Furthermore, monitor and track registrations to ensure that the number of attendees and associated costs do not exceed those requested and approved. If cost or attendance is likely to exceed the requested or approved amount, additional approval must be requested for the excess amount.

(5) Comply with all reporting requirements outlined in this instruction and in references (a) and (d).

(6) Comply with all conference planning requirements established in reference (e), appendix R.

b. Requesting Organization

(1) Explain each attendee's or group of attendees' role(s) at the conference when submitting an attendance request. Each request will be evaluated on an individual basis to assess the value of attendance and the associated contribution towards mission accomplishment. Attendees should strive to take an "active role" at the conference, such as speaking or presenting at the event or chairing a panel or discussion. Obtaining required Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act credits, continuing education units, or any other type of required training or certification credits for licensure purposes also constitutes having an active role. Requests for participants that do not have an active role must clearly demonstrate the value added by attending and the associated contribution to overall mission accomplishment.

(2) Review the proposed agendas of each conference and identify any non-mission critical events (e.g., banquets, parties, entertainment events, etc.). In these instances, commands must contact the hosting entity to determine whether the cost of these events is severable from the advertised conference registration fee.

(a) If a non-mission critical event is severable from the advertised registration fees, appropriated funds may not be used to pay for the non-mission critical event. However, attendee(s) may participate at their own expense if desired.

(b) If a non-mission critical event is not severable from the listed registration fees, commands may authorize the use of appropriated funds to allow the attendee(s) to participate in all conference events provided the overall conference registration fee is reasonable in light of the value received from the mission critical portion of the conference and that none of the activities will create an unfavorable perception of the United States Navy. Commands must clearly articulate the details of these situations in the conference request.

(3) Rental cars must not be requested unless they are the most cost effective means of transportation and specifically approved by the requestor's Defense Travel System (DTS) authorizing official. Lodging and meals should be reimbursed only at the authorized per diem rate unless otherwise deemed necessary per reference (e) and approved by the requestor's DTS authorizing official. High-quality government and military lodging options are available at <http://www.dodlodging.net> and should be utilized within the guidelines of reference (e). If applicable, travelers are required to file tax exemption forms to reduce lodging expenses. Travel authorizing officials and certifying officers are responsible for protecting taxpayer funds from fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement.

6. Submission Guidelines. All requestors must utilize OPNAV 5050/11 Conference Request Form in seeking authorization to host or attend a conference. Detailed instructions are included on the last pages of OPNAV 5050/11 and should be reviewed and adhered to closely. If available, review by legal counsel prior to submission is highly encouraged. Submit OPNAV 5050/11, the conference agenda, and all other supporting documentation to the appropriate approval authority via the chain of command.

a. For conference requests with total estimated costs exceeding \$100,000 or that have historically exceeded \$100,000 in total cost to the DON, subparagraphs 6a(1) through 6a(3) apply.

(1) DON-hosted conferences and attendance at non-DoD hosted conferences which have historically exceeded \$500,000 require a waiver and specific approval by SECNAV or UNSECNAV, and therefore require significant planning and lead time in order to be properly reviewed and approved.

(a) DNS will issue data calls utilizing DON Tasking, Record, and Consolidated Knowledge Enterprise Repository (TRACKER), or another DON approved tasking system, at least 120 days prior to conference start date for all conferences requiring tier 1 approval.

(b) All requests must be submitted to the appropriate tier 2 approval authority for review no later than 90 days prior to the conference start date.

(c) Tier 2 approval authorities must consolidate and provide an endorsement for all received requests before submitting them via the chain of command to DNS no later than 60 days prior to the conference start date. DNS will combine all Navy requests and forward the completed package on behalf of the CNO to the DON/AA. DON/AA will review and submit a consolidated DON-wide request to SECNAV or UNSECNAV no later than 30 days prior to the start of the conference. Exceptions to the 60-day submission requirement will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and must include justification for the late submission.

(d) Per reference (a), conference requests with estimated costs exceeding \$500,000 must include justification of the exceptional circumstances existing whereby such a conference is the most cost-effective option to achieve a compelling purpose.

(2) DON-hosted conferences and attendance at non-DoD hosted conferences which have historically exceeded \$100,000 but are under \$500,000 require approval by a tier 2 official, as defined in subparagraph 4b. Unless otherwise directed by the tier 2 approving official, final conference requests are to be submitted to the approval authority no later than 30 days prior to the start date of the conference or date conference approval is required. For example, if a contract must be signed 60 days prior to the conference start date, the final conference request must be received 90 days prior to the start date.

(3) DON/AA maintains and regularly publishes an “Over \$100K” list of non-DoD hosted conferences which historically have exceeded \$100,000 across the DON. Even if the estimated total cost to an individual command will not exceed the \$100,000 threshold, a request must still be routed to the appropriate tier 2 approval authority if the conference is found on the “Over \$100K” list. The list is published annually and is available on the DON/AA SharePoint site at: <https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/DUSNM/DONAA/CPEM/SitePages/Attending%20a%20Conference.aspx>. Periodic updates will be made throughout the year as additional information becomes available.

b. Conference requests with total estimated costs \$100,000 or less should be routed to the approval authority directed in reference (a). These authorities are summarized in table 1.

c. Conference approval authorities are authorized to provide one-time approval for recurring DON-hosted conferences within the limits of their approval authority. One-time approvals must identify control conditions for continued approval (e.g., cost limits, attendance limits, duration limits, and location restrictions) and are subject to any additional restrictions imposed by higher authority. Organizations hosting a recurring conference are still subject to all reporting requirements outlined in references (a) and (d) for each time the recurring conference is held.

d. DON-hosted conferences include those co-sponsored with a non-DoD organization. Per reference (f), organizations should execute a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or memorandum of agreement (MOA) if co-sponsoring with a non-federal entity. Co-sponsorship agreements should be reviewed by servicing legal counsel prior to submission to ensure compliance with all applicable fiscal and procurement laws and regulations. No contract, MOA, or MOU may be signed prior to receiving conference approval. It is the command’s responsibility to submit requests on an appropriate timeline to obtain approval and execute the requested event.

e. Navy-hosted events tailored specifically for Navy personnel that occur separately either before or after a non-DoD hosted event are permissible. However, the cost for the Navy-specific event must be separated into its own conference request and approval must be obtained from the appropriate conference approval authority. If the Navy-hosted event is not exempted and costs exceed \$20,000, it must be reported following references (a) and (d).

f. Attendance at DoD-hosted conferences (e.g., hosted by the Army or another DON organization) does not require individual approval from a DON conference approval authority. Approval for all attendees at a DoD-hosted conference is the responsibility of the DoD host. Attendees must coordinate with the hosting organization’s conference point of contact for accounting and reporting purposes.

g. Per reference (a), conference approval is not required for conferences resulting in no cost to the DoD.

(1) Gifts must be properly accepted and documented as per references (g) and (h).

(2) If reimbursable funds are used to offset or cover conference attendance costs and originate from a DoD entity, a conference request is required. If reimbursable funds not originating from a DoD entity are used to completely cover conference attendance costs, no conference request is required. Any event with an associated cost realized by the DoD requires a conference request, regardless of amount.

(3) If a conference is scheduled to occur concurrently with other unrelated travel, a conference request is not required so long as conference attendance does not result in any additional cost to the DoD (e.g., conference fees, additional travel, or per diem expense, etc.).

h. Virtual conferences not involving travel do not require conference approval, regardless of the number of attendees or if conference fees are paid.

i. If an event is exempted from conference approval requirements under one or more of the circumstances outlined in reference (a), such determination must be approved by a flag officer or SES with advice of servicing legal counsel. Exemptions must be made in writing and retained as a matter of record for 5 years. A flag officer or SES, with advice of servicing legal counsel, may issue blanket exemptions for recurring events, subject to any restrictions imposed by higher authority.

j. Hosting organizations must comply with all reporting requirements identified in references (a) and (d).

(1) All organizations who host conferences requiring hosting approval (i.e., non-exempt, non-virtual) with costs in excess of \$20,000 must comply with the reporting requirements of references (a) and (d) within 15 days of conference conclusion. See reference (a) for the list of conference expenses to be included. Note that attendance costs incurred by other DoD personnel (non-DON) must also be included in the cost estimate report.

(2) Organizations hosting a conference over \$20,000 must identify a conference reporter who will be responsible for reporting conference information to the DoD. The identified conference reporter must request access through the DoD Conference Tool Web site at <https://eitsdext.osd.mil/sites/DoDConferenceTool/Pages/home.aspx>. Per DoD policy, all conference reporters must be approved by the tier 1 (SECNAV or UNSECNAV) representative, who is DON/AA. Requesting access to the tool from the Web site will automatically send an e-mail request to DON/AA.

(3) Commands are not required to report costs expended for attendance at non-DoD-hosted conferences.

7. Records Management. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media and format, must be managed per SECNAV Manual 5210.1 of January 2012. Records of conference requests, approvals, exemptions and all other documentation pertaining to conference management must be retained for a minimum of 5 years.

8. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, DNS will review this instruction annually on the anniversary of its effective date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, DoD, SECNAV, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will be in effect for 5 years, unless revised or cancelled in the interim, and will be reissued by the 5-year anniversary date if it is still required, unless it meets one of the exceptions in OPNAVINST 5215.17A, paragraph 9. Otherwise, if the instruction is no longer required, it will be processed for cancellation as soon as the cancellation is known following the guidance in OPNAV Manual 5215.1 of May 2016.

9. Forms and Information Management Control

a. OPNAV 5050/11 Conference Request Form is available for download from Naval Forms Online, <https://navalforms.documentservices.dla.mil/web/public/home>.

b. SECNAV RCS 5050-1 has been assigned to the data collection using OPNAV 5050/11.



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Releasability and distribution:

This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically only via Department of the Navy Issuances Web site, <http://doni.documentservices.dla.mil>